10: d'Orleans--282 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 354, 563 Ethnic subgroups

"We all remain talking in the sala. Some candles have been made of yellow wax (sold in disks), which the men [LSS: Kha boatmen in the service of a Laotian] roll round a cotton wick by rubbing them both between their hands; the light is good."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

following a crowd. It was about two miles from the town's centre 527
and I passed several pagodas on the way, where carpenters were
working by lamplight in preparation for a future festival.

An enclosure had been built round the pagoda in which every 354
kind of light, from hurricane lamps to fluorescent tubes, had been 527
concentrated in an anarchic glare. The pagoda had hired a generator 545
for the occasion. There was no entrance fee, but young ladies with
demurely lowered eyes waited just inside to accept donations, in
return for which you received a candle, a posy of Japanese lilac and
two joss-sticks in a bamboo container. Among the many attractions
was a free theatre show, lasting for many hours, indistinguishable,
except to an expert, from the theatre of Siam. Actors remained on
the stage for what seemed interminable periods, occasionally ad-
vancing or retreating a few steps. Meanwhile their babies played
happily round their feet, and quite frequently a stage-hand would
walk across and interrupt a scene for a few seconds to pump up the
pressure in the hurricane lamps.

On a nearby platform the *lap ton* was being danced. Once again 242
it was the major attraction, but as it was still incorrect for Laotian 301
girls to dance in public, religious enterprise had arranged for 535
hostesses to be brought over from Siam, just across the river. The 542
pagoda hired the girls for the three nights and lodged them in a 527
nearby building. It cost a piastre to cavort round the stage for
about fifteen minutes with one of them. They were dressed in
hideous knee-length frocks, and some seemed to have permanent
waves. The backward Laotian girls in their dowdy finery, their
silk scarves, their skirts woven at the hem and waist-band with silver
and gold thread, and their abundant jewel-decked chignons, could
only look on wistfully. As I arrived the organizers were having 403
trouble with the microphone – indispensable adjunct to any social 527
occasion in the new Far East. A young man chanted a soft, nasal
melody which could only be heard within the *boun* enclosure itself.
But suddenly the electricians were successful with their tinkerings
and all Vientiane was flooded with a great, ogrish baying. The